

Rappite Dye House
Southeast corner of Main
and Granary Streets
New Harmony
Posey County
Indiana

HABS No. IND-38

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

RAPPITE DYE HOUSE

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Location: Southeast corner of Main and Granary Streets,
New Harmony, Posey County, Indiana

Present Owner: Mrs. Jane Owen, c/o Don Blair, New Harmony, Indiana

Brief Statement
of Significance: This brick structure was built c. 1816 by the Harmony
Society as a dye house in their Utopian experimental
community.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The Harmony Society; later
by The Owenite Community.
2. Date of erection: About 1816.
3. Builder, suppliers: The Harmony Society.
4. Notes on alterations and additions: The building was constructed in three stages: The west section, 29' x 22', first; the middle section, 17' x 22', next; and a log cabin at the rear last. At the time of erection of the second section, doors at the west end and at the existing stair were replaced with windows. The existing stair replaces an enclosed stairway against the original east wall which was removed from the first to the second floors. Part of the original east wall was removed and replaced with a board partition, and a new door, into the second section, was installed. The second section was used for dye making. A log cabin was later added to increase the facilities. One of two dye vats was removed from the second section and a door was cut into the log cabin. A new vat was placed in the cabin. The building was later turned into a residence and a porch and door added to the north side in the late 1800's. A large loading dock opening on the south side of the building was also reduced to a single door, and the remaining dye vat in the second section was removed. At present the building is being restored by Mrs. Jane Owen.
5. Important old views: Library, New Harmony, Indiana.
Don Blair, New Harmony, Indiana.
6. Source of information: Interview with the engineer in charge
of restoration of the house, Mr. Don Blair, New Harmony,
Indiana.

B. Sources not yet investigated: Museum, Harmony, Pennsylvania.
Library, New Harmony, Indiana.

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- C. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: New Harmony was the home of two of the most widely known Utopian experiments tried in the United States. The first, the Harmony Society, from 1814 to 1824, was under the spiritual leadership of George Rapp. The community prospered under the business management of his adopted son, Frederick. This group, from Wurttemberg, Germany, united by their common belief in the imminent second coming of Christ, practiced celibacy. The second was under Robert Owen, a Scotch philanthropist and reformer, who brought scientists and teachers to the Middle West, including William Maclure. Robert Owen named the town New Harmony in 1826.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a two-story brick building, started c. 1816 and built in two stages, with a one-story log addition. It is a simple structure built as a dye house.
2. Condition of fabric: Exterior in fair condition; inside poor.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. General dimensions and orientation: Two floors and a cellar, rectangular shape, 65'-10" x 22'-1", with the long dimension of the building running east-west. There is an entrance to the brick section on the south side and two entrances to the log section, one on the east and one on the north.
2. Foundations: Brick with stone footings.
3. Wall construction: Solid brick, 1'-1" thick.
4. Openings: Plank doors. Double-hung windows with six-light over six-light sash and operational slat shutters.
5. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with wood shake shingles.
 - b. Cornice: Overhanging boxed cornice on west end.
6. Chimneys: Large brick chimney for heating and dye vatting.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: Factory-type dwelling with working areas on first floor and living quarters on second floor.
2. Stairways: Open, L-shaped stairway with banister railing.

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Enclosed stairway to attic at former location of similar stairway which was removed.

3. Flooring: Plank floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Exterior walls, partly plaster over brick; wood partitions, paneled. The west 29' of the brick building has a ceiling made of 1" x 6" slats mortised into joists wrapped with oat straw and smeared with mud with plaster beneath. The rest of the ceiling in the brick structure has hand-split hickory lath plastered. There was either a plaster board attached to the bottom of each beam or the beams were hacked to receive the plaster finish.
5. Doorways and doors: Cased doorways with typical Rappite moldings; both plank and panel doors.
6. Trim: Typical Rappite moldings.
7. Hardware: Wrought-iron locks with porcelain door handles; wrought-iron hinges.
8. Lighting: None.
9. Heating: Fireplaces.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The house is on a flat site at the southeast corner of an intersection.
2. Outbuildings: 18' x 22', one-story log cabin attached at the rear for work space.

Prepared by John W. Carmack, Architect
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